

Motorcoach Task Force comments on the Waterfront Planning Process

Thank you for allowing us to address the forum regarding motorcoach transportation.

Tourism is vital to Alexandria's local economy, and motorcoaches and tour buses perform functions that benefit the City in many respects. However, motorcoach operations at times conflict with residential neighborhoods and the City's important historic fabric. Our Task Force was established by the City Manager in April 2008 to address these concerns and recommend motorcoach management strategies to City Council. The Task Force is comprised of five residents, five business/industry representatives, one representative from the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission and five staff/City Council members, including staff from Transportation & Environmental Services and Police.

Our Charter calls for us to develop a proactive approach to motorcoach management that recognizes the economic value of the industry and balances its operational needs with measures to limit intrusive effects on Alexandria's neighborhoods, historic resources, the environment, quality of life, traffic and parking.

In our year of work, we have reviewed best practices and built consent on measures that balance the multiple interests of the City with regards to the public health, safety and welfare of the community.

In March, City Council approved nine short-term Task Force recommendations that are a blend of operational measures, enforcement and education. The primary recommendations related to the waterfront planning area include the designation of the unit block of King Street as one-way westbound and more aggressive police enforcement of motorcoach violations such as double-parking and idling. There is also existing short-term, unreserved parking in the 500 block of North Union Street and loading/unloading available on the unit block of King Street and The Strand.

The Task Force is also moving forward on longer-term recommendations that continue to address motorcoach transportation in a holistic manner.